

Plan Commission Minutes
December 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers

Commission Members Present: Granlund, Erickson, Helgeson, Wolfgram, Davis, Obaid, Johnson, Brandvold, Christopherson

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Allen, Noel, Baumgartner, Wittwer

1. Call to Order – Chairperson Granlund called the Plan Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call – Chairperson Granlund called roll for the meeting. Commissioners Granlund, Erickson, Helgeson, Wolfgram, Davis, Obaid, Johnson, Brandvold, and Christopherson were present.
3. Open public comment period for items not on the agenda noted as public hearings. No one from the public came forward with comments on the items at hand.

Consent Agenda

4. Approval of November 14, 2022 minutes.
5. Final Plat Approval – For Recommendation to City Council
 - a. P-13-22 – SCS Eau Claire Phase III

Motion by Commissioner Helgeson to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Christopherson and the motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

6. Public Hearing – For Recommendation to City Council – Rezoning (Z-1718-22) C-3H to R-4P and Site Plan (SP-2232) Student Housing

Senior Planner Noel presented a request for rezoning approval to redevelop the vacant Shopko building and associated parking lot into two four-story apartment buildings connected by a central hub. Noel noted that there were like developments in the area that also redeveloped from commercial to residential and that it meets the Clairemont Avenue Educational and Medical District plan. He touched on the conditions being to redesign the area around Wendy's drive-thru lane, noting that several design options were submitted by the applicant. He also recommended adding a condition to require a CSM to split off the Wendy's drive thru from the rest of the site and combine it with their lot.

Commissioner Johnson asked Noel to clarify how much of the site will be dedicated to multi-family housing versus student housing, Noel deferred that question to the applicant.

Commissioner Christopherson asked how traffic is going to be affected by the development. Engineer Wittwer asked her to clarify if she meant onsite or offsite. Christopherson clarified that she meant how it would affect the Stein-Clairemont intersection. Wittwer gave some history on the project, noting that the city looked at purchasing some land in that area and rerouting the frontage road further south, and that the TIA will determine what needs to be done.

Commissioner Erickson, asked if he expected it to be more or less than the Shopko, Wittwer noted that he was unfamiliar with the counts of big box vs student housing.

Bailey Copeland, the applicant, noted that the buildings will be mostly student housing, but it will not be age restricted. Copeland also addressed drive aisle to the south of the Wendy's noting that they don't have cross access agreements with Wendy's and Red Lobster and that the existing easement for Wendy's only covered the drive-thru lane and menu board, not the parking not the easement. She concluded her statement by questing the legality of the condition for a CSM and how the parking was approved in the first place.

Commissioner Wolfram asked how affordable the rent will be, Copeland responded that she will follow up with her.

Commissioner Christopherson asked if the site will be managed, Copeland responded yes. Christopherson then asked about the number of students, she responded that it would be similar to Metro Crossings.

No one from the public came forward with any questions or comments during the public hearing.

Motion by Helgeson to approve the rezoning and site plan with staff conditions. Seconded by Wolfram.

Commissioner Erickson noted that he was still concerned about Wendy's/Red Lobster and that regardless of easements and ownership, there has traditionally been cross access through the drive aisle to the south of the Wendy's. He further stated that it wasn't conducive to cut off access in that area and encouraged the applicant to work with staff to preserve that access point.

Commissioner Christopherson stated that it was difficult to imagine where the traffic went through to the nearby grocery store and was in favor, but had concerns. She stated that she was in favor of Metro Crossing, and encouraged targeting senior housing with this project.

With no further comment, and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Public Hearing – For Recommendation to City Council – Rezoning (Z-1719-22) TR-1A to R-3P and Preliminary Plat (P-14-22)

Chairperson Granlund announced the applicant's request to postpone the item, and opened up the public hearing.

No one from the public came forward to speak on the item.

Motion by Helgeson to postpone to January 3, 2023. Seconded by Christopherson and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Public Hearing – For Approval by the Plan Commission – Conditional Use Permit (CZ-2216) and Site Plan (2234) – Eau Claire County Humane Association

Director Allen presented a request for approval of a conditional use permit (CUP) for the recently annexed Eau Claire County Humane Association and the associated site plan for their new building. He noted that a CUP was required for a vet clinic/kennel in Eau Claire, the vet clinic is not open to the public.

Commissioner Helgeson asked about a proposed future concrete walk and asked if it was required or if additional pedestrian refuges would be required. Allen deferred the question to the applicant.

Kate Lohrenz, architect from HGA, came forward. She noted that the new building will serve the existing use of the property and accommodate the growth of the Humane Association's operation. Lohrenz also noted that the existing building will continue to be in use until her client is able to transition over the new one. She concluded by covering the operation of the site and mentioned that the garage will be used for their one fleet vehicle and that on rare occasion it may be used for large animal vet work.

Luke Nichols, landscape architect for the project also spoke on the item, discussing the traffic flow and storm water engineering on the site, noting that they will be improved onsite. Nichols specifically addressed the pedestrian walkway, noting that parking was increasing by 17 stalls and that they were limiting the amount of curbing to respect the rural nature of the site.

Commissioner Erickson commented on the interior design of the facility, noting that the kennels don't have direct exterior access. Lohrenz said that was correct. He then commented that the animals would need to be escorted through the building, which Lohrenz also confirmed was correct.

No one from the public came forward with any questions or comments during the public hearing.

Motion by Erickson to approve the conditional use permit and site plan with staff conditions. Seconded by Wolfgram.

Commissioner Christopherson stated that this was initially before Plan Commission for the annexation and that what they were proposing would be an improvement to the site.

With no further comment the motion carried unanimously, with the exception of Commissioner Davis who abstained.

9. Public Discussion – For Approval by the Plan Commission – Certified Survey Map (CSM-6-22) – Wiggins CSM

Director Allen presented a request for a 3-lot subdivision in the Town of Washington. Allen noted that according to the intergovernmental agreement that Eau Claire had with the Town of Washington, land division was permitted at a density of one (1) unit per ten acres within the Sewer Service Area (SSA) with an exception being made for infill lots. Allen explained that the property will have access to city water, but not sewer as it is approximately half a mile away from city limits. He further explained that the home shown in the aerial photo has already been gutted and is ready to be demolished, with the applicant planning to build a new home for himself on Lot 1 and sell off the remaining two lots. Allen also mentioned that he would be speaking on behalf of the applicants due to conflicts that came up for them.

Commissioner Erickson asked if it would be possible to restrict access to Lot 3 to only being from Patton Street and not Lowes Creek Road. Allen deferred to Engineer Wittwer. Wittwer noted that Patton Street was Town of Washington Jurisdiction and Lowes Creek Road was Eau Claire County jurisdiction and that it could be a condition put on the certified survey map (CSM) by the county. Granlund called on the applicant; however, the applicant was not in attendance.

Motion by Erickson to approve the CSM with a condition to recommend the access to Lot 3 be exclusively to/from Patton Street. Seconded by Johnson and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Public Discussion – For Approval by the Plan Commission – Site Plan (SP-2236) – Eau Claire Periodontics Keystone Addition

Chairperson Granlund left the room prior to staff's report. Vice-chairperson Wolfgram assumed chairing the meeting.

Associate Planner Baumgartner presented a request for the approval of a site plan for Eau Claire Periodontics new location, going over the various requirements and noted that standards would need to be followed for landscaping, lighting, and signage.

None of the commissioners had any questions or comments for staff.

Vice-Chair Wolfgram called on the applicant.

Sally Dodd, applicant representative explained the parking, noting staff and projected clients, noting the training use as an additional reason for parking.

Motion by Helgeson to approve the site plan with staff conditions. Seconded by Brandvold and the motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Davis abstaining.

11-14. Public Discussion – For Approval by the Plan Commission – Site Plan (SP- 2237- 2240) – SCS Eau Claire Lots 8-11

Chairperson Granlund returned to the room and resumed chairing the meeting.

Director Allen presented a request for approval of a site plan for Lots 8-11, covering each lot/site plan in turn.

Commissioner Christopherson asked if there was any place in the development that was looking at trails in addition to sidewalks, or instead of sidewalks. Director Allen noted that there were some trails that were proposed as part of Phase I and deferred to the applicant for more information.

Chairperson Granlund asked if it would have the standard landscaping standards. Allen replied that that was correct and deferred to the applicant to explain how the landscaping and trail plan for the entire site interacted with each individual site.

Commissioner Erickson asked if the storm water issues have been figured out yet. Engineer Wittwer replied that Westridge Village had an existing pond but it had no overflow. The applicant was required to provide the outlet for it, noting that they all work in conjunction and meet city code.

Jeff Seward, engineer with AEC working on the project, came forward on behalf of the applicant. He noted that there is a proposed trail in Phase I that has not been constructed yet. Phase II will not have a trail system as there is no room for it. They are still working on Phase III, and that depending on the city comments, they may design them.

Christopherson asked if the trail system in Phase I would connect to Christopher Drive. Jeff Seward commented that it would be going from the cul-de-sac on Ashton to the one on Bedford.

Motion by Helgeson to approve all the site plans with staff conditions. Chairperson Granlund corrected the motion stating that it should be one item at a time. Director Allen confirmed that it should be one at a time.

Motion by Helgeson to approve the site plan for Lot 8 (SP-2237) with staff conditions. Seconded by Christopherson.

Commissioner Christopherson questioned why there wasn't any baseline data for the carbon calculator when (Station 955) had information. Director Allen responded that project was providing some information to help Eau Claire build its baseline data for the carbon analysis. Chairperson Granlund clarified that this was the next phase of an older project and was not previously required to meet those standards, and that the other project (Station 955) had more in-depth submissions as it fell under the new standards. Allen concluded by explaining that some basic information was provided for each of the site plans, but the expectation was not there for this project.

Commissioner Christopherson noted that during the general development plan, the color and materials for each structure were noted as possibly differing later on and asked if that was the case now. Seward noted that the colors would not necessarily be what is shown in the photo and that he would need to confer with the owner for more specifics.

With no further discussion the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Helgeson to approve the site plan for Lot 9 (SP-2238) with staff conditions. Second by Christopherson and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Helgeson to approve the site plan for Lot 10 (SP-2239) with staff conditions. Seconded by Johnson and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Helgeson to approve the site plan for Lot 11 (SP-2240) with staff conditions. Seconded by Davis and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Discussion Item – Approval of the 2023 Annual Work Program.

Director Allen covered the work plan, noting that the previous meeting covered the current status of the 2022 Work Program and went over the proposed 2023 Work Program, noting that this is the time to approve or suggest any changes.

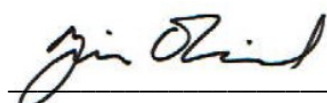
Motion by Brandvold to approve the 2023 Annual Work Program. Seconded by Christopherson and passed unanimously.

16. Future Agenda Items and Announcements

Director Allen announced that the next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 3rd. He also noted that the regional housing study will be underway at that time, and that the Housing Opportunities Committee (HOC) will be helping in the effort; that the zoning code overhaul will be taking place starting early next year; that the Shawtown Neighborhood planning effort is moving forward; and that the Short-Term Rental code update will be forthcoming.

17. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.



Zina Obaid, Secretary